

Elder Bobby Willis



Rewards On Earth; Inheritance In Heaven

The word “Works” has caused many conversations over the years resulting in numerous opinions relating to rewards received for doing them. Let me begin by establishing one great truth... Rewards are on earth (this side of the grave), and an Inheritance (Eternal life) is after death in Heaven (Paradise). Both rewards and an inheritance are the results of works, but not by the same ones. Rewards are blessings of God on His children when they are obedient in following His teachings, where an Inheritance is an Eternal Gift given by God as the result of the work of Christ for God’s children. Notice Ephesians 2:8-9, **“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”** Then we have a second witness of this truth in Titus 3:5, **“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;...”** This should establish that Eternal Life is not a “reward” but rather an “Inheritance” which is given as a “gift of God.”

The Psalmist David established the premise of rewards being while we live on earth in Psalm 18:20, **“The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me.”** David’s usage of “rewarded” and the word “hath” are both past tense and he is recognizing the mercy of God in extending timely “rewards” for his faithfulness. In the sweet book of Ruth (2:11-13) we find Boaz speaking to Ruth of her faithfulness to her mother-in-law Naomi and told her **“The Lord recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust.”** Boaz knew of the hardships which Ruth had encountered and was speaking a prayer of his heart that Ruth be highly blessed the remainder of her days on earth. He desired that God would bless her mightily. He was not referring in any sense of God giving her eternal life for her deeds toward Naomi.

There are two types of inheritances found in the scriptures; an earthly inheritance and an heavenly inheritance. Earthly are those left by parents to their children (also by God to His promised children concerning the Land of Canaan), and Heavenly as Christ has prepared a place for all of His children in Paradise. For an example of an earthly inheritance, notice Numbers 34:2 while remembering that the land of Canaan was a gift of God to the children of Israel which they did not merit: **“Command the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land of Canaan; (this is the land that shall fall unto you for an inheritance, even the land of Canaan with the coasts thereof:)”** Now, for examples of heavenly inheritances, listen to the Apostle Paul in Acts 20:32, **“And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.”** Then we go to Hebrews 9:15, **“And for this cause he”** (Christ) **“is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.”** And then Peter expresses this beautiful promise for all of God’s children in I Peter 1:4, **“To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.”**

Paul, in the Colossian letter, would seem to muddy the waters of rewards and an inheritance if we did not rightly divide the word of truth when he said, **“Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ”** (Colossians 3:24). However, notice that the reward is “of the inheritance”, NOT *‘of an inheritance.’* What makes the difference? A reward *‘of an inheritance’* would mean that eternal life would be as a result of the reward given for the works which one did. That is salvation by works which is not biblical truth. Paul got it right when he said, **“reward of the inheritance”** which means we are rewarded while we remain on this earth with blessings beyond measure, know that the Lord is our redeemer and that we have a great hope of a better place to come.

Notice these three rewards we are blessed to enjoy in obedience to the Lord’s commandments:

1. John 113:17, **“If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.”**
2. I Peter 3:14, **“But and if ye suffer for righteousness’ sake, happy are ye:...”**
3. I Peter 4:14, **“If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you:...”**

May we recognize the benefits and rewards which God grants on earth and His gift of Eternal Life when we enter in to our inheritance as God’s children. In the

mean time, **“Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:...”**
(Psalm 103:2). ***“Think About It.”***